

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mexican National Indicted on Identity Theft

(Phoenix – Oct 31, 2003) Attorney General Terry Goddard announced today the indictment of Ramiro Ayala-Aguilar on charges of taking the identity of a California truck driver.

Ayala-Aguilar, 21, has been detained and deported numerous times by INS officials in Douglas and Tucson since July of 2000. Ayala-Aguilar figured out that using the name, date of birth and social security number of legal residents made detection and detention much less likely.

Ayala-Aguilar has been indicted on three counts of taking the identity of another person, and one count of fraudulent schemes and artifices. The fraudulent scheme charge alleges that Ayala-Aguilar developed an overall plan to misidentify himself to police as an U.S. citizen in order to avoid punishment for traffic offenses and to avoid deportation by the Federal Government.

"This is another example of the growing problem of identity theft. In addition to costing Arizonans millions of dollars in financial losses, identity theft is also a national security issue. I plan to seek additional funds from the legislature to hire more investigators and prosecutors to help fight this epidemic," said Attorney General Goddard.

Arizona Motor Vehicle Division records show that Ayala-Aguilar successfully obtained an Arizona identification (ID) card under the identity of his victim. This ID card was used by Ayala-Aguilar to presume legal status in the United States.

If convicted, Ayala-Aguilar could face up to 10 years in prison. Assistant Attorney General Todd C. Lawson is assigned to the case, which was investigated by detectives with the Phoenix Police Department.

These charges are merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. Aguilar's arraignment date is November 6, 2003 at 8:30 am.